

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; An Observer Program for At-Sea Processing Vessels in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery**

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before March 8, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0500 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to Matt Dunlap, Fishery Policy Analyst, West Coast Regional Office, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, (206) 526-6119, or mattthew.dunlap@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

In 2011, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) mandated observer requirements for the West Coast groundfish trawl catch shares program. For all fishery sectors, observers must be obtained through third-party observer provider companies operating under permits issued by NMFS. The regulations at §§ 660.140(h), 660.150(j), and 660.160(g), specify observer coverage requirements for trawl vessels and define the responsibilities for observer providers, including reporting

requirements. Regulations at § 660.140(i) specify requirements for catch monitor coverage for first receivers. Data collected by observers are used by NMFS to estimate total landed catch and discards, monitor the attainment of annual groundfish allocations, estimate catch rates of prohibited species, and as a component in stock assessments. These data are necessary to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements to prevent overfishing. In addition, observer data is used to assess fishing related mortality of protected and endangered species.

II. Method of Collection

This collection utilizes both electronic and paper forms, depending on the specific item. Methods of submittal include email of electronic forms, and mail and facsimile transmission of paper forms. Additionally, this collection utilizes interviews for some information collection and phone calls for transmission of other information.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0500.
Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 268 (5 providers (supplying a total of 75 observers or catch monitors) and 263 fishing vessels).

Estimated Time per Response: For providers: 15 minutes for observer training/briefing/debriefing registration, notification of observer physical examination, observer status reports, other reports on observer harassment, safety concerns, or performance problems, catch monitor status reports, and other catch monitor reports on harassment, prohibited actions, illness or injury, or performance problems; 5 minutes for observer safety checklist submission to NMFS, observer provider contracts, observer information materials, catch monitor provider contracts, and catch monitor informational materials; 10 minutes for certificate of insurance; 7 minutes for catch monitor training/briefing registration, notification of catch monitor physical examination, and catch monitor debriefing registration. For vessels: 10 minutes for fishing departure reports and cease-fishing reports.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 525 (305 for providers and 220 for fishing vessels).

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0 in capital costs as it is assumed that each of the 5 observer/catch monitor providers will maintain a computer system with email capacity for general business purposes and that each vessel owner/operator has access to a telephone for toll-free calls.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: The regulations at §§ 660.140(h), 660.150(j), and 660.160(g), specify observer coverage requirements for trawl vessels and define the responsibilities for observer providers, including reporting requirements. Regulations at § 660.140(i) specify requirements for catch monitor coverage for first receivers.

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Sheleen Dumas,

Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.

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